

A MORE COHERENT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The Malaysian Health Coalition supports social distancing measures announced by the government. Although seemingly drastic, we believe that these measures are necessary to contain the spread of COVID-19 and save lives. These measures are not unique to Malaysia, with many countries already closing schools or restricting movements, and some declaring full lockdowns or a state of emergency.

We understand the concerns of Malaysians, we acknowledge their confusion, fear or panic, and we recognize the period of inconvenience and hardship that we must endure together.

Therefore, we strongly urge the government to:

1. **Coordinate a coherent all-of-government response**. Our crisis response must demonstrate clear leadership and be non-politicized. All ministries, agencies and state governments must share responsibility in a coherent fashion. We must learn lessons from the public confusion and chaos after the 16 March announcement. To elevate science & public health in outbreak decision-making, we suggest that the Health Minister be appointed a semi-permanent member of the National Security Council.
2. **Mitigate unintended consequences**. For example, the government must coordinate a response to provide childcare for the children of health professionals, fight panic-buying, hoarding and profiteering, and ensure the welfare of health professionals, all workers, older adults and vulnerable communities.
3. **Strengthen crisis communications**. The government must be more predictable in their decisions, to allow time for Malaysians to prepare psychologically and logistically. All government agencies have to act calmly and coherently with each other, to eliminate confusion or chaos.

To our fellow Malaysians, the movement restrictions are necessary and will save lives, but they are not magic. We won't see immediate results, this outbreak is likely to worsen before it gets better, and we must still be vigilant with social distancing. Your support will save lives and help us care for you.

We must fight COVID-19 with a national effort and no regrets. We must see a stronger and more coherent government, a resilient and caring all-of-society response, and individual responsibility for social distancing. We can succeed only if all Malaysians join the national effort, protect each other, and trust the science.

BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA.

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1. Prof Dr Rosmawati Mohamed (Academy of Medicine Malaysia)
2. A/Prof Dr Mohammad Husni Jamal (Academy of Family Physicians)
3. Datuk Dr Kuljit Singh (Association of Private Hospitals Malaysia)
4. Dr Sri Wahyu Taher (Family Medicine Specialists Association)
5. Dr Abdul Halim Shibghatullah (Chair, IKRAM Health)
6. Dr Jeffrey Abu Hassan (Islamic Medical Association Malaysia (IMAM))
7. Dr N Ganabaskaran (Malaysian Medical Association)
8. Dato' Dr Zainal Ariffin Omar (Public Health Physicians Association)
9. Prof Dr Sanjay Rampal (MMA Public Health Society)
10. Haji Mustafa Abd Majid (Malaysian Association of Medical Assistants)
11. Pn Sharipah Asiah Syed Junid Aljunid (Malaysian Nurses Association)
12. Mr Amrahi Buang (Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society)
13. Dr Ahmad Firdaus Mohd Haris (Medical Mythbusters Malaysia)
14. Dr Raj Kumar Maharajah (Medical Practitioners Coalition Assoc of Malaysia)
15. Dr Sunita Bavanandan (Malaysian Society of Nephrology)
16. Dr Muhammad Azrif (Malaysian Oncological Society)
17. Dr Hung Liang Choo (Malaysian Paediatric Association)
18. A/Prof Dr Pang Yong Kek (Malaysian Thoracic Society)
19. Pn Shahrina Zawawi (Malaysian Association of Speech-Language & Hearing)
20. Dr Murallitharan M (National Cancer Society Malaysia)
21. MedTweetMY

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2. Ms Ng Yeen Seen (#OpsHarapan)
3. CERAH Haze Action Group Malaysia
4. Dr Wu Lien-Teh Society

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